

# SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

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DEC / JAN 2015/6

## FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

As our thoughts turn towards Christmas and the autumn leaves are barely holding onto the tress, many of us will be thinking that 2015 has sped by?

I continue to be fascinated with the way each issue of the magazine appears to develop its own themes unintentionally. Music is one such theme in this copy from the interview with the conductor of the choral society; Nottakwire leading the carol singing around the village; the church choir at St John's and the FOOTLOOSE musical at Chiltern Edge. The second theme is about the exceptional people who live and work in our village, Tom Clark, Richard McQuillan and Jane Proctor whose stories appear in this issue. The common thread for each of them is their help for people less fortunate than ourselves, a focus which is highlighted in our minds at Christmas time.

While my own enormous thanks are due to the editorial team, our graphic designer, the committee and the deliverers who support each edition the people who really make the difference are the residents who email such exciting and varied articles. Perhaps in the quiet days after Christmas some of you will be inspired to provide yet more fascinating copy - I look forward to reading them!

From us all at the magazine, we wish you a very Happy Christmas and especially Good Health in 2016. ●

*Diana*

**Diana Pearman** Editor

Email: [editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org)



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While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information printed in this magazine, the editor and the publisher cannot accept any responsibility for the consequences of errors that occur.

**SC** SONNING COMMON  
MAGAZINE

## MEET THE TEAM ...



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# WELCOME TO OUR NEW PCSO

**My name is Mark Bell and I am delighted to inform you that I am your new PCSO for Sonning Common.**

You might have already seen me patrolling your area and wondered who I am. I have been with Thames Valley Police since 2004 when I joined the Dog Section at the Police College in Sulhamstead. I worked as a dog welfare officer and enjoyed my time there.

In 2007 I moved into Neighbourhood Policing where I had my training at the Culham Science Park near Abingdon. The inspector at the time informed me that I would be looking after Sonning Common. However when I eventually joined the Henley neighbourhood team, changes had been made and

I moved over to the Woodcote and Goring area.

During the eight years I learnt and gained valuable experience in engaging with all different age groups and solving issues in the community.

PCSO Colin Boyes will officially be handing over to me in early December so if you have any concerns please call into the Sonning Common office or say hello when I am passing.

'Have your say meetings' will be held outside the One Stop shop twice monthly and I look forward to meeting you. ●

## THIS HAS TO BE THE FINAL STAGE OF THE NDP!

Our written Draft Plan and its supporting documents is nearing the end of its pre-submission consultation period. The closing date is Friday 4 December. There is still time to send us your comments either online at [www.scp-ndp.co.uk](http://www.scp-ndp.co.uk) or on a feedback form available both at the Parish Office and the Library.

During November we have been adding the comments received about the Draft Plan to our Consultation Statement. This is a record of all the consultations we have had from start to finish of the Plan and any action which has resulted from them. In addition replies have gone to statutory consultees, landowners/developers and other stakeholders and are recorded on our Consultation Statement. Any relevant 'tweaks' to the Plan resulting from these comments will be made prior to presenting it to SODC for submission consultation with them, a further period of 6 weeks which will take us into January 2016.

The last stage of the process will be to present the Plan to an independent Examiner selected by us from a short list of three potential examiners given to us by SODC. The examination will happen sometime in late February or early March 2016.

We expect that we will be taking the Plan forward for Examination more or less in its current form. We have

worked very hard on the Plan and its supporting documents and will not be deflected from our timetable. It will go forward come what may.

There have been a series of successful appeals for housing developments in various areas of South Oxon, despite having been strongly opposed by residents, Parish and District Councils. It is evident that the only vehicle for local opinion and views about development in our Parishes to be upheld is by an active NDPlan. SODC's Core Strategy has not been able to defend unwanted or unallocated development of 159 homes in Benson, 120 and 80 homes on two sites in Chinnor or the 120 homes at Thames Farm. None of these areas were protected by an NDPlan, which was pointed out by the Inspector who upheld the appeal by developers in Chinnor. **No Plan no protection.**

When our Plan goes to Examination it will have 'strength' to resist an appeal for unwanted development. Once it has been voted in by you at Referendum it will give Localism teeth and you through the Plan control over what happens in our village.

We need your support more than ever to set the development agenda for Sonning Common. ●

Barrie Greenwood  
[gbgreenwood@hotmail.com](mailto:gbgreenwood@hotmail.com)

## HIGH FLYERS

You may only know them as the ladies that serve you the occasional cup of coffee or bacon bap but here in Sonning Common we have our very own 'flying squad'.

Debbie Fleming and her fellow flyers - Sam Kelly-Smyth, Vhairi McCulloch and Sue Gyngell recently completed a sky dive and have so far raised over £3,500 for their nominated charity - Cancer Research UK - sadly a disease that touches all of our lives.

If you wish to make a donation please call in to Fleming's where they will be accepting donations up until Christmas. ●



## GIFTS OF LIFE

**Little yellow, knitted ducks are popping up in unexpected places to help spread the message about organ donation.**

By the end of September nearly 5,000 ducks had been found in around 80 countries world-wide, as part of an international campaign to increase human organ donation.

The idea is that the ducks are left in public places, such as on the bus, at the library, or a park bench. People find them, take them home and are hopefully encouraged to donate their organs in future.

The ladies of Sonning Common Women's Institute have knitted at least 100 ducks in support of the Little Yellow Duck Project. Sue Hedges, branch secretary, explained: "Organ donations are down and people are dying as a result. We want to encourage people to register to donate their organs and to discuss the issue with their families so that families know their wishes."

The campaign was started in memory of Clare Cruikshank, who died in 2013, aged 24, after a suitable lung donor was not found for her.

Before she died, Clare made her family promise to donate her organs and tissue. Her generosity resulted in two young adults having their sight restored after receiving Clare's corneas. Clare loved little yellow, rubber ducks and had a huge collection of them.

For further information and to register for organ donation, please visit: [www.thelittleyellowduckproject.org](http://www.thelittleyellowduckproject.org) ●

## Macmillan coffee morning

**On Sunday 11 October we held our coffee morning. This is our seventh year of these fundraising events, and it gets better every year.**

The day started with a beautiful autumn morning, sunny and dry. We had stalls of cakes, jigsaws, books and CD's. We also sold bric a brac and had a table selling apples. The raffle was very popular and this alone raised £163.

Chris and Pauline worked flat out serving tea or coffee and a cake, and of course, had to do the mountain of washing up that goes with it!

Everyone worked so hard to bring this together, Gill and Fiona, Jenny and Denise, June and Laurence, Peter and Margaret and Carol and Diane, you all did a great job. Last but not least, how could I forget John Lambourne. He stood outside talking and generally encouraging people to part with their money and his bucket had a total of £135 in it. Fantastic.

In the couple of weeks leading up to this we had donations from people who couldn't come on the day, and organisations that wanted to support this very worthwhile cause. This helped to swell the total.

We do live in a lovely village and everyone loves a social gathering, and you certainly pulled out all the stops to make this the most successful Macmillan coffee morning we have done. We raised the magnificent sum of £773.86.

Thank you all, Linda Webb

**Over the last 7 years Linda and June have raised £3506 for Macmillan nurses ●**





# SCHOOL NEWS FROM SONNING COMMON PRIMARY

## INFANT BLOCK GIVEN MAKEOVER!

Oxfordshire County Council has funded some improvements for the Key Stage 1 infant block buildings, and so during October and November they have had a makeover!

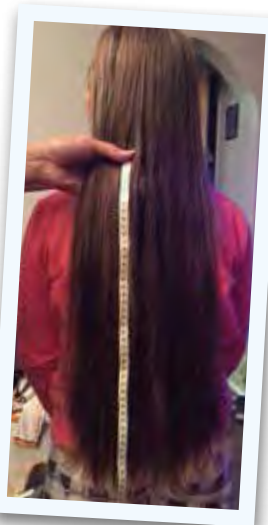
Lovely new blue and white fascias have been put up and new windows added to make the old building look almost brand new. ●

## An act of random kindness

Frankie Kempster, in year 4, has shown great bravery and kindness in deciding to have her long locks cut off and then donating them to The Princess Trust. The Trust makes real hair wigs at no cost for children who are suffering from hair loss due to cancer treatments. Frankie loves her long hair so this is going to be quite a change in looks for her.

She is not only donating her cut hair but also trying to raise as much money as she can at the same time. All donations raised will be split between The Princess Trust and the Dyslexia Research Trust in Reading. Frankie's mum has opened a Virgin money giving page [www.virginmoneygiving.com/Linda1Clark1](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/Linda1Clark1) for donations and the big cut will take place on Wednesday 2 December in Henley.

At the beginning of November Frankie's hair was 45cm (1 and 1/2 feet in 'old' measurements!) with another month of growing to go... Good luck Frankie. ●



# SUN SHINES ON FUND RAISING EVENT FOR BISHOPSWOOD

On a beautiful day in September Bishopswood hosted a fundraising event in the lovely Woodlands House in Henley.

There was a myriad of wares for sale from handmade cards and bath bombs to flowers and vegetables from the estate gardens.

The house is privately owned but the gardens of over 5 acres were open to wander around in and a woodland walk and walled garden were full of interest.

Refreshments with a bounty of homemade cakes were available to buy and eat under

the canopy and flowery face painting meant a fabulous total of over £1,000 was raised for the school.

Organised by the Bishopswood parents association member, and former learning support assistant at the school, Nicki Hybert said 'Over 100 people came and enjoyed the afternoon and we raised more than double the amount from last year, which will really help supply the children with extra equipment to stimulate them.' Nicki thanked all those who helped and their sponsor Beville Estate Agent. ●



# CHILTERN EDGE NEWS REPORT

## BRITISH COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AWARD SUCCESS FOR CHILTERN EDGE



The school has been awarded the British Council's prestigious International School Award for a third consecutive three year term in recognition of its work to bring the wider world into the classroom! The International School Award is a badge of honour for schools that do outstanding work in international education, such as through links with partner schools overseas. Fostering an international dimension in the curriculum is at the heart of the British Council's work with schools, so that young people gain the cultural understanding and skills they need to live and work as global citizens.

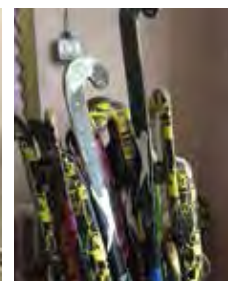
Chiltern Edge's international work includes a long-standing partnership with Gesamtschule Hollfeld in Bavaria, letter and information exchanges with schools in France, Italy and China as well as visits to France and Germany. ●

## Physical activity engages the students

The PE department has been particularly busy so far this term. Up to half term the students had competed in 11 tournaments, 43 league games, and 5 friendly matches in after school sport covering rugby, football (boys and girls) and lots of hockey.

The year 7 rugby team have been very successful along with the Year 11 boys' football team who have been playing in the County Cup. The Chiltern Edge School Association (CESA), who are the

staff and parent fundraising group, have purchased great new sports kits for the students to wear, and, very importantly, also bought the department a brand new washing machine to clean it all! ●



## SUCCESSFUL CAREERS FAIR

The 2nd annual Careers Fair was held in October and was very busy - full of year 9 and 11 students learning about what will be available to them after they leave Chiltern Edge.

Castle Vets, CAE Oxford Aviation Academy, Johnson Matthey and the Royal Berkshire Hospital were amongst the stalls at the recent careers fair held at Chiltern Edge School. With over 30 stalls to visit students were given a wide range of opportunities to explore. Local colleges and 6th forms schools were very popular, but having apprentices from BMW and student ambassadors from Reading University also generated interest.

It was again well received by both exhibitors and here are some feedback comments by exhibitors and students:

### Quotes from stall holders

"Well organised event"  
"This was a wonderful event and we shall be back"  
"Really good event, thank you".

### Quotes from students

"It was really good"  
"Good range of stalls"

Angela Adamson - who organised the event along with Clare Biddis said 'from the inaugural last year, the careers fair attracted ten more stall holders which was fantastic, and hopefully we can build on this again for 2016.' ●





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## EVENTS IN THE LIBRARY

## Friendly Fridays

Scrabble players come in for a game at 10am on most Fridays of the month, but the knitters/crafters seem to have stopped visiting. Everyone is welcome, with or without a project to work on. (We can supply wool, knitting needles & patterns or ideas). If you just want to come in for a chat that is fine!

If you'd like some help with learning how to use a computer, or want to improve your computer skills, we can find a volunteer partner to assist you, at a time to suit you - just ask the library staff.

## Rhymetimes

We have Rhymetimes for the under 3s on the first and third Mondays of the month at 10-10.30am, run with the help of staff from the Children's Centre.

## Storytimes

Children's storytimes take place every Saturday at 10am and we are planning 2 'special' storytimes for Christmas on 12 and 19 December. There will be Christmas stories and crafts, and home-made cakes for sale.

## ADVANCE NOTICE

National Library Day  
Saturday February 6 2016

Come join us then! Even though you think you have a library card, if you haven't used the library for a while you will have 'dropped off' the system. If you borrow just one item a year you will be counted as an 'active borrower' - which is very good for our statistics!



## Library at Christmas 2015

Join the library team for seasonal refreshments  
Friday 18 December 2pm - 5pm

**Closure at Christmas**  
From Thursday 24 December at 1pm  
to Saturday 2 January at 9.30am

You are very welcome  
to join us for

## Christmas Lunch

When?  
**Christmas Day**

Where?  
**Sonning Common Village Hall**

What time?  
**12.30 for 1 o'clock Lunch**

Who's invited?  
Sonning Common Residents who are on their own  
or can't face cooking a turkey for two

**Tickets £12 a head for a Full Christmas Lunch**  
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with guaranteed awful jokes!

Limited numbers so book your seat now  
Tickets on sale at Occasions from 12th November  
or call Chrissie on 0118 9721058

## Health Walks

With winter upon us it's good to wrap up warm and get out into the beautiful local countryside for a brisk walk. After a short break for Christmas and New Year the Health walks continue into 2016 with different starting places and new routes (weather permitting).

Join us to walk off your Christmas pudding: it's fun and it's free! In 2016 the Health Walk scheme will have been in existence for 20 years. There will be more news about the celebrations in the next issue.

The Health Walks timetable is available from the library, the Health Centre and the Herb Farm, or online at [sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable](http://sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable). If you'd like to talk to someone about the health walks, phone Colin Davies on (0118) 9722527.

Nottakwire invites you and yours to join us on our planned...



## Round the Village Carol Sing

Friday 11 December / 4.15pm - 7.15pm

If you would like to join us for (approx) 1 hour 45 mins traditional carol singing, on a pre-determined route around the village, there are only 15 places left.

Please register your intention to join us, by telephoning 972 1248 or emailing [margaret.moola@btinternet.com](mailto:margaret.moola@btinternet.com) giving your full name and contact details by Monday 7 December at the latest.

Children are most welcome, but parents/carers are expected to take full responsibility for their safety.

## Full details:

1. Registration at the Village Hall 4.15 - 4.30pm. Only those whose names have been pre-recorded will be admitted. All singers will receive a pass and a carol leaflet. On arrival back at the hall for refreshments, these will be collected in.
2. We anticipate arriving back at the hall at approx. 6.15pm when all singers are cordially invited to stay with us for hot drinks, mulled wine, mince pies and stollen. These will be provided GRATIS. However, we will be collecting to support 'Embrace the Middle East' (formerly Biblelands) who produce and provide our carol leaflets free.
3. You will need to bring a good torch or lantern. Maybe a small bottle of water!
4. If the weather is inclement and we have a concern over safety, the event will be held INFORMALLY in the Village Hall, starting at a revised time of 5.30pm. In this event we will contact all singers to advise the change of plan.

Remember there are only 15 places remaining - so make contact early if you want to come with us! We look forward to seeing you. Thanks for this - best wishes, Margaret.

Sonning Common  
Annual Village Quiz

FRIDAY 18 MARCH 2016 at  
SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL  
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Start time: 7.30pm

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Chiltern Edge Dates for your diary

## FOOTLOOSE

Everyone is really looking forward to the Christmas production of FOOTLOOSE

**This musical and dance extravaganza  
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# PAUL BURKE

## Picking up the Baton with new Musical Director of the South Chiltern Choral Society

By JOAN GRUMMANT

To pick up the baton after the respected conductor Gwyn Arch is no easy task, but Paul Burke has now completed a very successful first year with the South Chiltern Choral Society. He has found his first year to be 'lots of fun' and it also confirmed his initial impression of the society as very warm, receptive and welcoming. He said it was an honour to follow Gwyn and he now hopes to build upon the strong start he has made, and continue to guide the choir through an expanding repertoire with some challenging larger scale works planned for the future.

Both of Paul's parents are musical and his father was a professional musician for a while, so he had a good start on his way to a musical career. He started learning the keyboard at the age of seven, had organ lessons and carried on his passion for music at school and sang in the National Youth Choir. After a little bit of conducting at school and at university that side of his career gradually developed and it

now plays a much bigger role in his life. He believes he has achieved a balance of composing, conducting and teaching and finds all of them all very different but greatly rewarding.

Attracting people to commit to singing is a perennial issue facing most choirs and Paul, as a singing teacher, is very aware of the difficulties faced by young people starting out in music, particularly boys. They often take a break from singing when their voice changes and it can take a long time to settle down, so other interests are often pursued. Keeping programmes appealing, challenging and enjoyable for all is something he keeps a keen eye upon.

South Chiltern Choral Society will be presenting an interesting and lively concert at Chiltern Edge School on 12 and 13 December. The concert will include works by Vaughan Williams, Cecilia Mc Dowell and some close harmony arrangements of Christmas songs. It will also contain the ever popular traditional carols for audience participation. We hope that as many as possible support this very popular concert led by this dynamic young conductor. ●





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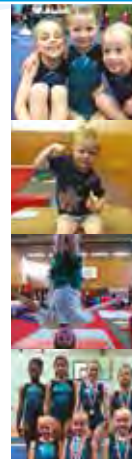
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# I DID IT!

By PHILLIPPA TAPHOUSE



October the 11th 2015. A day forever etched in my mind as months of commitment, planning, training and pain all came down to one thing...the Henley Half!



In my head I had made certain promises to myself:

1. I would run the whole 13.1 miles without stopping
2. I would run up Fawley Hill
3. I wouldn't finish last
4. I would finish before it got dark (we started at 9.30am)

The night before I was so nervous. Eat pasta everyone said to load up your carbs but I couldn't eat anything...so while my family tucked into a delicious meal, I sat with a piece of toast and a glass of water like a condemned prisoner (my last meal would definitely be more tasty). I noted, with little humour, that they all sat eating the meal cooked by me, cleared up by me, dined on pecan pie made by me, drank coffee made by me...didn't they realise I should be resting and mentally preparing myself? Seems not!

So at the start line, after my energy bar, listening to everyone excitedly talking about times and medals, I felt slightly sick. I was praying for rain but the sun stubbornly shone...I hate running in the sun! Off we went...and the first 7 miles were actually lovely. I would go so far as to say that I was enjoying it! Even as we passed Henley Rugby Club

at the halfway point and heard them announcing the winner, still our spirits weren't dampened. In the back of my mind, I knew I still had to conquer THE HILL - but I was on fire, I could do this!

As we passed through Fawley Court, a man was lounging half asleep on a tractor with a big trailer behind it...he pointed out, quite nicely I thought, that we were now approaching THE HILL.

Perhaps the trailer was to carry the people that couldn't make it...would this be me I thought to myself?

Almost immediately, I slowed right up. I didn't stop and I didn't walk but I did slow down...maybe because I was scared or maybe some sort of self preservation took over but up we trudged...even overtaking other runners!! Overtaking is unheard of when I run. It was a long way and it was really hard but just as we reached the top, a cool breeze blew a ticker tape of leaves onto us...and it was a defining moment. We had conquered Everest and felt on top of the world.

Coming down from the top of the world is harder than going up. Knees lock together and it really hurts but down we came and finally we were on the Fairmile and the end was in sight. We were just beginning to flag when we saw a group of people holding banners saying "Go Sonning Common girls" and "Keep Calm and Run On". Held aloft by our proud families it spurred us on (and brought a tear to our eyes) and we finished in 2 1/2 hours.. Well before it got dark!

I feel a massive sense of achievement. It hasn't been an easy thing, but by jove we did it!

AND, we raised a whopping £1,500 for Parkinson's UK and for that I thank everyone who sponsored us and cheered us on. Also I definitely couldn't have done it without Bronwyn. She never ever let me down and nagged and pushed me and never let me think for one minute that I couldn't do it. I also like to think that my auntie (who suffered from this cruel disease) was with me every step of the way and there was no way I was ever going to let her down.

I am living proof that you can take on a challenge and commit to it and focus on it...it's never too late to try something new that takes you out of your comfort zone (and off your sofa)...go on...have a go...you never know and you might find the hero inside yourself. ●



# EXTRACTING WORK

By JOAN GRUMMANT

Richard McQuillan is a well-known and respected figure in Sonning Common. He has just retired after thirty four years as a dentist from his Wood Lane Surgery and his first task has been to pay a visit to Tanzania for two weeks where he worked as part of a team of six dentists and four nurses who trained local clinical officers to extract teeth safely. The clinical officers already have training in First Aid and delivering babies and the training enabled them to extract infected teeth and relieve pain. In all, two teams journeyed to Africa to share their skills and between them they carried out and supervised the extraction of over a thousand teeth! Richard went as part of an initiative set up by the charity Bridge2aid and through his patients at Sonning Common he raised the wonderful sum of £2,100 in donations for the charity.

When they arrived a local Administrator had advertised their visit in villages using a loud hailer and the team were faced with daily queues of between seventy and a hundred people. Many of the patients had been in pain for a very long time and had made a long journey to see a dentist.

They were welcomed warmly by patients and local people alike, and the fact that about 70% of the world has no access to a dentist and toothache is debilitating and painful, made them hugely popular. The first week involved the dentists extracting teeth, watched and assisted by the clinical officers who were then supervised during the second week to continue the work alone. The clinical officers acted as interpreters to the patients although Richard had a list of basic Swahili phrases he could try and use. The nurses as well as other duties spent time explaining dental hygiene and the consequences of too much sugar cane! At the end of two weeks a certificate was awarded to successful clinical officers that is recognised by the Tanzanian government. During the two weeks Richard and his group extracted around 560 teeth.

The surgery was basic but all instruments were sterilised by pressure cooker and painkilling injections were available. At the end of two weeks all the clinical officers in Richard's team were presented with a certificate and a kit containing a pressure



cooker and extraction forceps so that this vital work could be continued.

Richard and the team stayed in a motel that was clean but basic. The bed was clean but the toilet was a hole in the floor! Food was invariably rice with a bean stew but they had meat occasionally and also fish heads. Bananas and water melon were grown locally and were also available. The average wage is \$2 a day. The nurses took bubbles for the children to play with and they were utterly enchanted by them.

Richard heard about the Bridge2aid charity at a conference and said the trip required a high level of teamwork but was very rewarding and great fun. For some people on his team it was a return visit and for one a fifth. Sharing skills with others is a very rewarding experience and one that Richard feels he might do again. Anyone who feels they would like to contribute to sustainable dentistry in the developing world can contact the charity at [www.bridge2aid.org](http://www.bridge2aid.org) ●





# A TRIP TO THE 'JUNGLE'

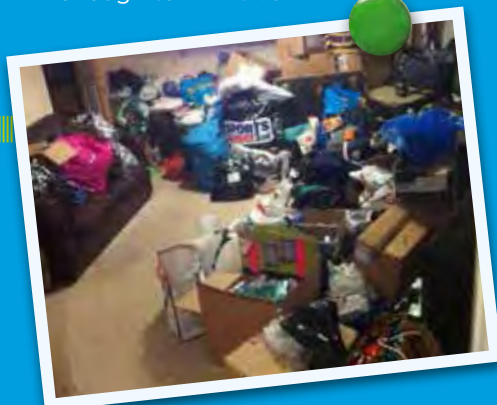
By CHRISTINE ATKINSON

We have all sat and watched the news about disruption at the Channel Tunnel in Calais, and the awful scenes from the camps where migrants and refugees are living. One local man decided that he had to actually DO something about it and launched a plan with his girlfriend and brother to go and help.

Tom Clark from Sonning Common decided to organise a van and ask some friends to donate a few helpful items to take with him. It seemed a really simple thing to do - 'I'd seen a lot in the media about it and felt I wanted to do something. There are people three hours' drive away from my house dying because they haven't got food and shelter' - but of course this sort of mission isn't always simple!

A group called CalAid had already set themselves up via Facebook and organised drop-off points in London for people to leave donations. They also started coordinating with other groups, like Tom, outside of the city. Tom organised his mission through them along with his girlfriend Zaneta and brother Arthur.

The appeal for donations took off immediately. The Henley Standard published a piece about it in early September, and by the following week his whole house had been taken over with sleeping bags, tents, tarpaulins, men's clothing and shoes, pots and pans and toiletries - more than enough to fill his van!



'People have messaged saying "that's amazing" but it's not amazing - people drive to Calais on booze cruises all the time. I don't see it as an amazing thing, I see it as being human. There are people there who are starving and children who look like they haven't eaten. How is that happening in the world today?'

The 18th September was a big day when lots of Tom's friends rallied round and arrived to sort, box up, and pack the van. There were plenty of helpers and by 10.30pm the job was done.



## They were ready to leave!

After a 5.15am start in Sonning Common they arrived at the 'Jungle' (the name given to the camp just outside Calais which has become a temporary home to around 3500 people, mainly men) and found their contacts with L' Auberge de Migrants who have a large warehouse and distribute donations.

The second day of the trip Tom and the others helped to distribute all the aid bags that they had brought with them. These were packed with food, toiletries, candles, hat, scarf, gloves and underwear. This was achieved in an orderly way, and they went back to the warehouse for more. Another van full was distributed before the end of the day. \*Tom had thought that he would take lots of photos on the trip, but he actually only took a few as it seemed too intrusive to photograph people waiting in queues for handouts from strangers.\*

During the third day the group helped to reorganise the warehouse and loaded up with unwanted donations (mostly clothes) to bring back to the UK for other charities before catching their ferry home.



Tom said 'We did what we set out to do, we certainly helped, got a better idea of what is now needed down there and we will be going back, but next time with people instead of donations! Thank you so much again to everyone who has helped - it got bigger than I ever thought it would and the support from complete strangers has been staggering.

*As an update to this, the news in November is that the camp has doubled in size during the last month to nearly 8000 with around 200 people arriving every day. Donations are still being brought over from the UK by well meaning people, but some items (an example mentioned was a satin bridesmaid dress!) seem to be just people having a clear out of their old clothes. Mostly they need trainers and walking boots (particularly sizes 41 and 42 - 7 and 8 in UK sizes), sleeping bags, and small men's trousers. They have no use for the bigger ones that are brought from the UK, because 'there aren't a lot of fat people in the camp', as one of the sorters says ...*

*A reporter from the Independent newspaper, visiting the site where he spent 3 nights, found really squalid conditions in the makeshift camp. The refugees want it to be known as the jungle because they hate it. They want people to know about the conditions. Everyday conditions in the camp are de-humanising.*

*However an Ethiopian woman says "No jungle. A jungle is for animals - we are people. Can't people see we are people?"*

*The situation is desperate and getting worse! ●*





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# ONCE YOU HAVE SEEN ONE FJORD

"You have seen them all" or so I was told when I set off for my first view of Norway and like all such statements it has more than a glimmer of truth. These beautiful waterways lined with majestic cliffs of black rock, powdered and crowned with snow (in March) are without doubt magnificent, but an unrelieved diet could pall. Luckily they are interspersed with either superb harbours or pretty little fishing villages so the scenery is constantly varying. To enhance this effect there are two railways, the Rauma and the Flam which carry passengers from the coast up river valleys to join the main North-South line, of necessity climbing ridiculous gradients and clinging to precipitous slopes with water falling and icicles all around before debouching at their elevated, snow covered junctions. Not for those with vertigo.

However, one really goes to Norway this early in the year in the hope of seeing the elusive Aurora Borealis. The appearance of this natural phenomenon depends on totally irregular events like the sunspot cycle and having a clear sky, so many fail. Our official outing in Alta displayed only a very disappointing glow rather less than the sodium glare over Reading so we considered ourselves extremely fortunate to experience a fantastic display later in the trip at midnight on a freezing traverse of the North Sea. (The company had generously supplied us all with arctic jackets) Cameras were everywhere but they do not act like the human eye and best results were obtained with long exposures and fixed tripods.

Otherwise we visited the famous "snow hotel" now sporting a full chapel so couples in search of "difference" could marry and spend their first night covered in reindeer skins on a block of ice. The snag was that any ablutions had to be performed in a neighbouring building which might have cooled ardour. It melts in May and is rebuilt each year with a new theme.

In the north live the Lapps or "Sami" people who were until comparatively recently treated as second class citizens or rather not citizens at all by the Norwegians but now are allowed to vote and have their own parliament. Inter-marriage is also now quite common. We were taken for a ride on a series of the most dilapidated sledges behind distinctly moth eaten reindeer (at this time of year they are losing their antlers) The Sami still herd reindeer and live on their meat, (reindeer stew is delicious) skins and other products for income but nowadays use snowmobiles and helicopters. I coveted one of their knives which are given as a sign of manhood and with which you could cut wood, flay reindeer or even shave but the wife vetoed it

Dog sledding is a fabulous experience. The dogs used were not the pure white Siberian huskies so beloved of Hollywood but a smaller breed in variegated colours, nevertheless, all adorable, friendly and extremely powerful. We were allowed into the puppy enclosure which sent most of the ladies into raptures. My wife was surrounded by a group attacking her fur boots and crutches which pleased her no

end. A glorious day dashing over the snow in a picture perfect background was the highlight of the trip, lights notwithstanding.

Norway only achieved independence recently which might account for its reluctance to join the European Union. It is rich in hydroelectric power, natural gas and fish which enables it to boast "we have no poor" although we did meet some beggars. Then why is its cost of living so high? I was told "we are saving up for the future". The case rests! ●

Peter Dayton







# A PIONEERING NURSE RETIRES

By **DIANA PEARMAN**

**Over 200 people visited the village hall on Saturday 7 November to bid farewell to Jane Proctor and to wish her a long, happy and healthy retirement. It is a testament to her work with patients that so many turned out on a very wet and windy morning to attend the cake and coffee morning in aid of Macmillan nurses.**

For this event she was ably supported by husband Roy, Tania, Anne and Kay who made endless cups of coffee in the kitchen and by many other volunteers who provided the cakes. Andrea ran the Tombola and a princely sum of £700 was raised for the Macmillan nurses.

Jane has been the Practice Nurse at Sonning Common Health centre for 25 years and while it is well known that the doctors encompass many proactive initiatives for preventing illness, fewer I suspect are aware of the role of the nurses.

Joining the practice in 1990 having trained at the Royal London hospital, she commenced the initial research, planning and evaluation of effectiveness for a weekly clinic for patients suffering from arthritis. The clinic was set up in 1992 and it was a pioneering initiative to have a GP based arthritis clinic, believed to be the first in the country. In 1994 her work with rheumatology patients won her a Pathfinder Award and in the following year she was awarded Practice Nurse of the Year.

Jane's career has been marked by a series of achievement. One night per week she worked as a specialist nurse in the Cardiology unit at Battle hospital while she also spent 4 half days at the surgery. In 2005 she transferred her expertise to the Cardiac clinic set up in the Sonning Common practice by the very forward thinking GP Dr Hasler. He was convinced that nurses could be used more effectively and delegated the blood pressure and cholesterol checks for those patients who had suffered heart attacks to Jane. As part of the initiative to increase nurse expertise Jane enrolled at Oxford Brookes University and was in the vanguard of training for nurses to be able to prescribe medicines when it was introduced some 10 years ago.

Several years previously her earlier training was through a link with Joel David at Battle hospital when she followed a course consisting of study days and examinations in Stafford and qualified as the only nurse in the country

to perform joint injections for arthritic patients. 'After many years of limited pain relief for patients there are now exciting developments such as methotrexate which is much more effective in patient pain relief but does need monthly monitoring of cholesterol levels and prescription of the drug issue is carefully controlled' Jane explained. Jane's work at the Health Centre clinic will be continued by another of the practice nurses.

She has seen many changes over the years perhaps the greatest one being the introduction of computers, the PCTs and now the Clinical Commissioning Group have all brought about different ways of working. The Health Centre is still at the forefront of these developments, now led by Dr Burnett.

As if all of the above was not sufficient? Jane and her husband moved to Gallowstree Common over 40 years ago, originally both were from Essex and their four, now grown up children, have mostly followed in her footsteps. The son in Australia is a radiographer, one daughter is in paediatric nursing, another a practice nurse in Wokingham and a further one is a teacher.

So what does the future hold? Travelling will feature strongly and Jane is off to Australia in February. Meanwhile she will continue to look after the Asthma clinic and perform joint injections on a Friday, much to the relief of her patients! ●

**Jane would like to say a big thank you to all the patients for their donations to Macmillan Nurses.**



# A REQUEST FROM BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Does anyone know of one Harry Kingcombe Stannard?

I have just recently started researching my late husband's family tree. This is on behalf of my two daughters and also my grandson and granddaughter. My husband's grandfather (and therefore my children's great grandfather) was named Harry Kingcombe Stannard. Harry Kingcombe came to Australia in 1910, aged 30 and settled in Queensland.

On 28 August 1915, he enlisted at Toowoomba Queensland, in the 15th Field Ambulance, No 1 Australian General Hospital, ambulance driver. Private Harry Kingcombe Stannard served in France and in September, 1918 was mentioned in despatches thus:

For conspicuous devotion to duty. This man has at all times, under the most trying circumstances, carried out his duties with remarkable energy and ability. While in charge of the evacuation of wounded from the Advanced Dressing Station at WARFUSSEE-ABANCOURT and HERBECOURT his handling of the cases and his untiring energy were largely responsible for the timely and comfortable evacuation of cases. His reliability has at all times been remarked.

## ONE OF THE 'SONS OF SOMMON COMMON'

On his WW1 Australian Army enlistment records, Harry Kingcombe gives his next of kin as his father, F.H. Stannard from Sonning Common. However, Harry's place of birth is listed as Middlesex. Harry returned to Australia in 1919, obviously met my husband's grandmother Annie, who already had children, they married in 1922, and had three more children, including my husband's mother, Jessie Stannard (married name Moy). Harry Kingcombe died in Brisbane in 1947, aged 67 - his grandson, (my husband), was two years old at this time, and Harry Kingcombe is buried in Lutwyche Cemetery. His wife, Annie Caroline (who we all knew as Nanna and who we all loved as the family Matriach) died in 1990, aged 93.

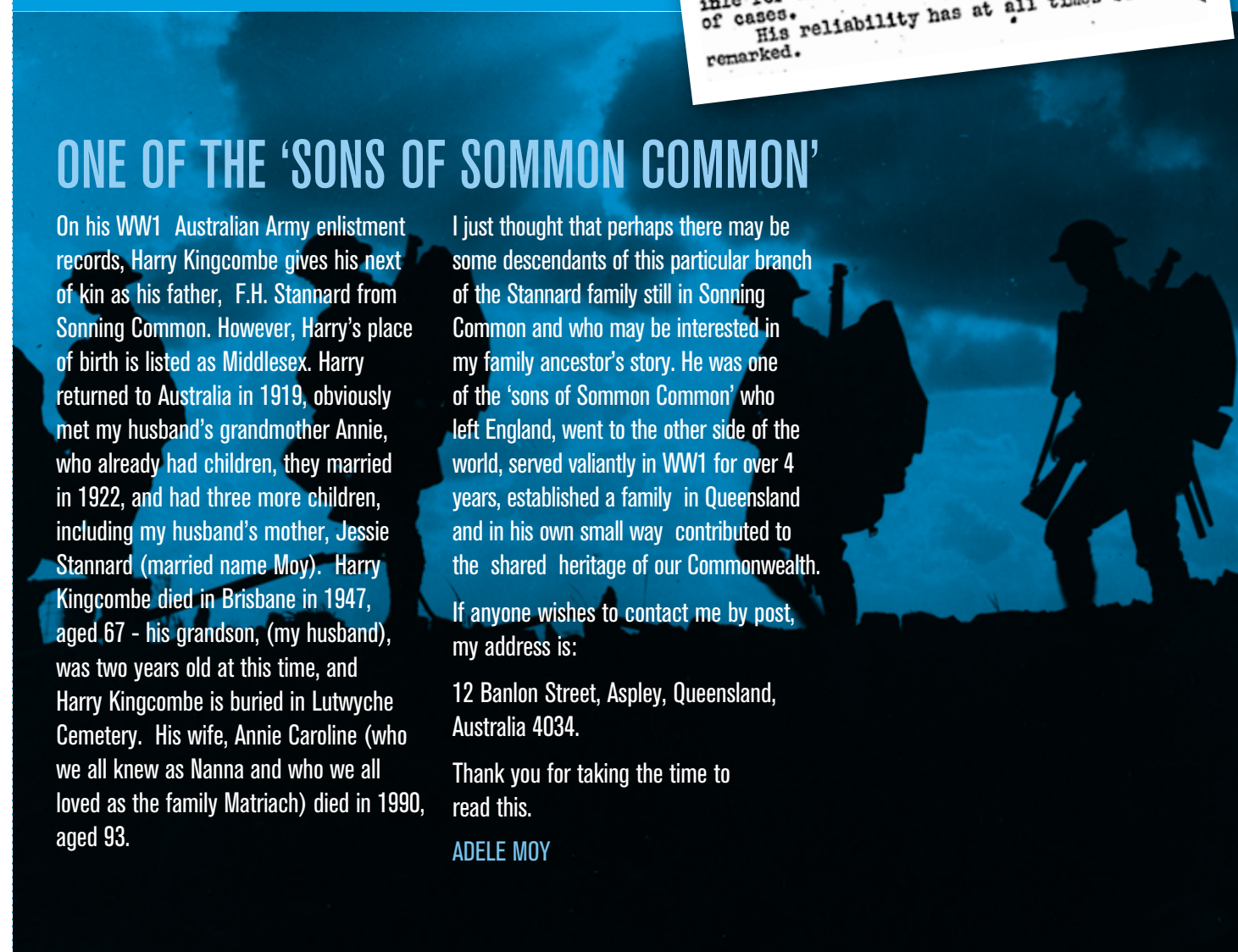
I just thought that perhaps there may be some descendants of this particular branch of the Stannard family still in Sonning Common and who may be interested in my family ancestor's story. He was one of the 'sons of Sommon Common' who left England, went to the other side of the world, served valiantly in WW1 for over 4 years, established a family in Queensland and in his own small way contributed to the shared heritage of our Commonwealth.

If anyone wishes to contact me by post, my address is:

12 Banlon Street, Aspley, Queensland, Australia 4034.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

ADELE MOY





# OUR SERVICES ARE UNDER THREAT

With OCC stating that over 50% of their funds are going to 2% of the population for social reasons and the last missive from OCC requesting views on massive further cuts to basic infrastructure costs (road maintenance and salting, library and children's funding, community services) how much of this falls back onto SODC to argue their case, bearing in mind that few people know the difference between OCC and SODC?

All they know is that everything is a tax for which they perceive they get lesser resources by the season. Many of these OCC cuts will fall backwards

onto SODC (fly tipping for example) so will SODC increase their tax rates to counter this? What would be the response if the general public worked on the principle of 'No taxation without representation' and refused to pay their full local tax demands? This continued reduction in services for no reduction in tax is already beyond the pale. If I had a commercial contract with either SODC or OCC to supply services I would cancel them for breach of contract. Unfortunately I have no contract, the law obliges me to pay through the nose regardless of what services I receive because I have an address with an Oxfordshire post code.

It is time both OCC and SODC got

together and told our MP (A Government representative elected by us) that enough is enough. We cannot spend vast amounts of money on a very small section of society (because National Government refuses to pay) to the detriment of the greater well-being of local Council tax payers. You, our District and County Councillors, need to combine and rise up to fight the National Government on our behalf. This continued attrition of basic services cannot continue. If, as is projected, we have a 1963 Winter many people will suffer or even die because of these budgetary cutbacks and subsequent withdrawal of basic services in order to 'balance' the National Government's books. ●

DIRK JONES

## Please be considerate

I have recently acquired a disabled driver's badge for my car, for which I am very grateful -it makes shopping possible. In Sonning Common's car park, however, I have been disappointed to find, on three occasions that the two designated places have been taken by vehicles NOT displaying a badge. On two occasions the offending vehicle has been a large trade van -how many disabled builders are there?

If spaces are clear in the same row it is not so bad, but the car park is small and often full and the overflow car park means a much longer walk to and from shops.

In contrast, I have been struck by how many times passers-by, and notably the assistants in local shops, have offered help in a number of ways. Could this goodwill be an example to able-bodied drivers? ●

JILL VALLIS

## MY OWN SOCIAL MEDIA

I haven't got a computer, but I was told about Facebook and Twitter and am trying to make friends outside Facebook and Twitter while applying the same principles.

Every day, I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel, what I have done the night before and what I will do for the rest of the day. I give them pictures of my wife, my daughter, my dog and me gardening and on holiday, spending time by the pool. I also listen to their conversations, tell them I 'like' them and give them my opinion on every subject that interests me... whether it interests them or not.

And it works. I already have four people following me; two police officers, a social worker and a psychiatrist. ●

PETER WHITE

(This appeared in the Oldie magazine, sent in by Philip Collings)

## Just for kids

### HELLO EVERYONE

Who's excited about Christmas? I am! I can't wait to get my hands on some great gifts that Santa has left. I'll be looking forward to when all the shops become Christmassy. I really want the snow to come seeing as it hasn't for a while (perhaps it has been storing up so this Christmas it will snow extra hard). If you're excited about Christmas, then I am sure you are not alone. Tell me at: [junioreditor@sonningcommonmagazine.com](mailto:junioreditor@sonningcommonmagazine.com)

ZACK



### MINECRAFT STORY MODE ★★★★★

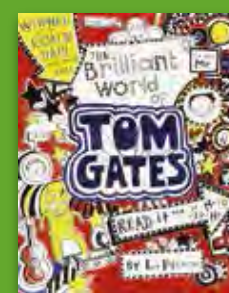
This game is for all Minecraft lovers who like animations. It is basically an animation that you control. Say you had to pick between two gods to save the world, who would you chose? Depending on your choice the entire game may change. But choose wisely, one wrong choice and you might die or get a friend killed. If you want to see the game in action, a lot of you tubers (not me) play it so it's not that hard to get another review online. Four stars definitely, maybe five! ●

### FILMREVIEWS

The only film I have seen recently was **Scorch Trials from The Maze Runner** (12A). I liked it but I wouldn't recommend it to your younger siblings because they will get a big shock! It was quite scary in places and very different from the original Maze Runner.

There are loads of films in the cinema that I want to see at the moment. **Pan** looks good. Everyone knows the story of Peter Pan so I don't need to describe it here but I think the film looks at what happened before the usual story and the graphics look amazing! There's also **Hotel Transylvania 2**, the second story of the dreaded monsters, and **Inside Out**, a film about why people think what they think - just imagine people in your head! I bet there will be lots of good films out in time for Christmas too. Have you seen anything good recently? Email me and I will include your review here. ●

### BOOKREVIEW | Tom Gates by L. Pichon ★★★★★



Tom Gates is my new favourite book. Lots of kids know it and it is really funny with tricks and jokes played. In the first book Tom plays a joke on his sister called the 'Caramel Wafer Trick'. This is a great trick. Here's how to do it: **1.** Carefully and not ripping the foil, unwrap the wafer. **2.** Eat it. **3.** Put the foil back as it was at the start. **4.** Give it to anyone. **5.** Laugh your head off when they find out there is nothing there! See, its great. Five stars indeed! ●

### CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

S	J	N	I	E	G	M	P	Z	B	P	F	N	S
I	R	G	F	X	I	I	D	D	U	H	A	E	G
K	C	E	R	O	F	N	Y	Q	A	B	I	O	P
X	T	L	E	K	T	U	G	P	P	K	J	O	K
S	S	V	Z	D	S	F	P	W	O	L	P	Z	A
S	A	S	R	F	N	Y	E	O	R	M	Y	A	M
T	L	N	J	E	H	I	C	F	A	M	I	L	Y
N	U	K	T	B	R	M	E	S	F	I	O	S	M
E	P	Q	H	A	W	T	P	R	E	D	J	S	F
S	F	T	V	J	N	V	X	G	M	G	W	V	P
E	S	M	I	K	N	R	M	W	B	I	B	A	V
R	L	S	E	A	Y	F	Y	E	O	J	U	B	J
P	K	A	N	X	F	K	H	H	N	N	M	E	D
H	E	G	W	Q	C	B	K	L	I	M	S	A	R

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# TOM FORT HABITS

For better or worse, I am a creature of habit, a slave to routine. The other day, walking Meg (still fine, thanks, still tearing the post up on a daily basis) I made a little list of the things I do most days at roughly the same time that aren't strictly necessary to maintain life but help keep me sane.

The first is the newspaper. Reading a paper online is no good to me. There has to be a physical object on the table, keeping breakfast (usually porridge and toast, but I am flexible) company. I like to devour breakfast and newspaper alone, but I don't entirely get my own way there.

Then there is the post-lunch nap. Pretty lax, you may say, but you'd be wrong.

I'm up before the crack of dawn most days to work and by one o'clock I'm flagging. The afternoon sleep accords with our circadian rhythms, and if everyone had one, the world would be a better place.

My bath. I'm not a shower man. You can't think properly in the shower. I have many of my most profound thoughts in the bath – some of them when I'm asleep. Plus I can listen to the news bulletin, or sometimes the Archers, as long as there's not too much of that odious Rob.

Drink. I have to face the melancholic fact that I am alcohol dependent. I am not a major boozier – you'll have to take my word for it – but I find the thought of an evening without a beer or a glass

of red wine profoundly dispiriting. I've tried doing without two or three nights a week, and I can do it, believe me. But I don't like it. I've come to the conclusion that my life is the poorer without alcohol. I know, it's pathetic. But best to be honest with yourself and others, I always say. ●



## COOKS CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

Christmas is fast approaching and the time for guilt free indulgence has arrived.

### BUTTERSCOTCH BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING – serves 8

- 300g loaf day-old bread, torn into small pieces or try using brioche or Pannetone
- 1L milk
- 100g caster sugar
- 125g butter, melted
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

#### BUTTERSCOTCH TOPPING

- 300g dark brown soft sugar
- 8 tablespoons golden syrup
- 400ml water

1. Preheat oven to 180 C / Gas mark 4. Butter a 23x33cm (9x13 in) baking dish, alternatively use 8 individual serving pots. 2. In a large bowl, combine bread, milk, sugar, butter, eggs and vanilla; mixture should be the consistency of porridge. Pour into prepared dish. 3. In a saucepan, bring the brown sugar, golden syrup and water to the boil. Boil, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Carefully pour the hot syrup mixture over the bread mixture. 4. Bake in preheated oven 1 hour, until nearly set. ●



### MISSISSIPPI MUD PIE – serves 8-10

- 100g butter or margarine, melted
- 200g plain chocolate digestive biscuits
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder (optional)
- 200g cream cheese
- 100g caster sugar
- 1 tablespoon very strong coffee
- 200ml double cream
- 150g plain chocolate

1. Crush the digestive biscuits and mix in the melted butter. Press firmly into a loose bottomed flan or cake tin. Place in fridge to chill. 2. Beat the cream cheese and sugar together. Divide into two bowls. 3. Add the coffee to one bowl, mix well. Spread over the biscuit base and return to the fridge. 4. Melt the chocolate and allow to cool slightly. Whisk the double cream until thick. Add the chocolate to the cream and add to the second bowl. Pour on top of coffee layer and refrigerate again. 5. Leave for a minimum of 2 hours but preferably overnight. ●



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## SPECIALIST HELPLINES AVAILABLE IN DOMESTIC ABUSE CASES



Henley Citizens Advice is raising awareness of specialist helplines people can call if they suspect that someone they know is in an abusive relationship.

Although friends and family can provide a lifeline by encouraging victims to seek specialist help, Citizens Advice say they currently face difficulties in helping victims this way because most people in Britain do not feel equipped to help people who are suffering from domestic abuse.

Surveys also reveal that more than one in three people who have personally experienced abuse didn't tell anyone else. Victims are often too afraid or isolated to talk to others about their problem.

Henley Citizens Advice staff and volunteers are trained and supported

to identify instances of domestic abuse with a simple but sensitive approach during face-to-face advice. The staff and volunteers are then able to provide support and advice to those who are experiencing, or have experienced, any kind of domestic abuse.

People who want to support victims of abuse need to know the steps they can take and where they can get specialist help. Citizens Advice is joining the national "Talk About Abuse" campaign so we can help ordinary people to know how to recognise abuse, talk about it safely and enable victims to make the right decisions for themselves.

If you are experiencing domestic violence or abuse, or you are concerned that someone you know might be in an abusive relationship, you can seek help by calling confidential free phone

helplines. You can also get help and support from your nearest Citizens Advice, or call AdviceLine on 03 444 111 444. ●

### HELPLINES:

- If the victim is a woman, you can get help from the free phone, 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (run in partnership by Refuge and Women's Aid)
- If the victim is a man, you can get help from the Men's Advice Line on 0808 801 0327
- If the victim is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, you can get specialised help from Broken Rainbow on 0300 999 5428

## CRIPPLING SOCIAL CARE COSTS FORCE BUDGET CUTS

Oxfordshire County Council is considering far-reaching cuts to public services due to the crippling cost of social care.

The council has just completed a six-week public consultation on proposals to save more than £350m by reducing and cutting services and running some differently. The closure of the Oakley Wood recycling plant and reductions in library services are among the changes being proposed.

The savings are necessary due to the growing cost of social care, mainly for

the elderly and young people. There are 11,193 social care clients in Oxfordshire representing 1.68 per cent of the 666,000 population.

The county's social care budget equates to £207m, which is 46.2 per cent of its annual £448m operating costs. So, nearly half of the council's budget is spent on less than two per cent of the population.

Feedback from the public consultation will be considered prior to the council setting its budget for 2016/17 at a meeting later this month. ●





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ALL PROPERTY MATTERS

# Parish news

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## LISTEN TO LOCAL VIEWS

The parish council's Planning Committee decided to write to John Howell MP over the outcome of a planning appeal in October. Here is the letter:

Dear Mr Howell

Members of the Planning Committee wish to register their dismay at the recent decision by a Government Planning Inspector to allow a new three-storey detached house to be built in the former garden of 31 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common.

This is despite well-considered objections to the application by residents and this Planning Committee and South Oxfordshire District Council which had refused the application (P14/S3419/FUL) in the Spring.

The Inspector's decision to permit this unsuitable development is in spite of the Government's own legislation, introduced in June 2010 to prevent the over-development of neighbourhoods by developing garden areas.

Regrettably, this decision has paved the way for a three-storey, three-bedroom house to be shoe-horned between existing residential properties and for an ugly shared access with 31 Woodlands Road to be constructed, which will be out of character with the area.

Separation distances between adjacent properties will be minimal and the new dwelling will overlook neighbouring one-storey properties in Appletree Close, undermining the privacy of existing residents.

Sadly, this is just the latest example in a series of cases in Sonning Common where planning applications - objected to by residents and the parish council and refused by the district council - were granted on appeal by a Planning Inspector.

The decisions to allow 10 new houses to be built behind the Indian restaurant and the card/gift shop, in Wood Lane, are also cases in point. The Government promotes the sustainability of town and village centres. Yet, how can town and

village centres become more sustainable by providing additional shops and services when potential space for this provision is given over to residential development?

The village centre is becoming increasingly busy leading to traffic concerns and more demand for car-parking spaces. Where is the space for additional car-parking provision now?

The Planning Committee recognises the need for new housing but it is vital that development occurs in the right places. Finding the most suitable sites for development, in consultation with residents, is the purpose of our Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Please, Mr Howell, for the sake of our residents and our village character, listen to local views, respect local democracy and use your influence to uphold the principles of sustainable development and prevent further detrimental development from taking place in our village. ●

## NEW HOUSING FOR BRINDS CORNER

The parish council has applied for outline planning permission to build two new houses on a plot of land donated to the village.

The site, at Brinds Corner, on Wood Lane, was donated by the developer of Brinds Copse in the 1960s for the benefit of the residents of the village. It later became overgrown with trees and fell into disuse.

The parish council hopes to sell the site with planning permission in place and use the proceeds for village projects, which could include seeking solutions for traffic and parking issues in the village centre. ●

## SKATEPARK EMERGENCY ACCESS

**The parish council has written to the South Central Ambulance Service to provide full details of how to access the Sonning Common Skatepark site in an emergency.**

The skatepark, at the Bishopswood Sports Ground, is accessible from the Horsepond Road. Access is via three gates, two of which have combination locks and one a padlock and combination lock system.

The codes for all of the combination locks have been passed to the ambulance service and a key to the padlock is held in the Parish Office.

The parish council is reassured to know that access to the ground in an emergency is not reliant upon a key holder for the padlock being available, since ambulances carry bolt cutters. ●

Sonning Common Parish Council  
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# Church *news*



## MUSIC IN OUR ANGLICAN CHURCHES

I joined the parish in response to a paragraph in 'Round And About' magazine one June, pleading for someone with a good sense of humour to come and be St John's choir leader. I had never been to Kidmore End, despite having lived in Emmer Green for 24 years while I was Director of Music at Queen Anne's School, Caversham.

So I went to inspect the place, to read the notices on the church door and look for somewhere to park, and then the following Sunday went to the morning service to see what it was like. I had already made up my mind that I wouldn't consider it if there was anybody in the choir who squawked or if the preaching was boring. But the people in the pew in front turned round to welcome me, a stranger, as soon as I had sat down. Furthermore, there were no squawks from the choir, the preaching was short and very much to the point, a churchwarden came to speak to me after the service and there were jokes over coffee afterwards. I was amazed to see a village church using incense. I thought 'this place is special' so I signed on to start the following September. That was eight years ago.

Singers from Christ the King have always joined the choir from St John's for special occasions and we have

continued that tradition which links our churches. From that first rehearsal, when they all turned up to see what the new choir leader was like, we have gone from strength to strength. We have a good spirit within the group, where we tease each other in a friendly way and laugh a lot. We try to sing as well as we possibly can, so we tackle a wide variety of repertoire according to our resources, which vary as people move into the parish and out of it. We are a balance of all ages in the choir, always including a few children, and I am full of admiration for the way they respond to what we do - I make no concessions for them, except the explanation of strange words and the like. We sing music from all over the world, contemporary songs as well as old favourites, music from the Iona Community and from the Catholic tradition, and we have had a tradition of singing music from New Zealand, in honour of our assistant priests, formerly Barry Olsen and now Susan Cooper. From the first, our congregations have responded very enthusiastically to what we sing, which is very rewarding for us.

We are looking forward to the next local Choirs' Festival is to be held in St Mary's, Henley, on Saturday 30 January 2016. All the participating choirs sing items of their own choice in the first half of

the evening's concert, followed by a joint performance of a major work. This year it is to be Vivaldi's lovely Magnificat, less well-known than his Gloria, but just as beautiful and just as much fun to sing. I am honoured to have been asked to conduct the Vivaldi this year; it is a bring-and-sing event, so if anybody reading this would like to come and sing, please get in touch with me for more details. I plan to hold some local rehearsals before the event, to help us get acquainted with a not-so-well known work. I have been Director of Goring Chamber Choir for the last 25 years, where we have sung this Magnificat and several members of that choir are coming to take part in this occasion.

Meanwhile we have some new carols for the carol service on Friday 18 December 7.30pm, where we hope to include some children from the Kidmore End Primary School Choir (that was great fun last year) and are expecting good things from the Sonning Common Cubs, and the Christingle service nearer Christmas. There is a lot going on in our churches - I am proud to be part of it all. ●

Frances Brewitt-Taylor  
francesbt@hotmail.com  
0118 948 2743

## WELCOME BACK TO SONNING COMMON FREE CHURCH

There are signs of new life at Sonning Common Free Church in Grove Road. Following on from 'Café on the Corner', which was running each week on Thursday mornings, the church will begin a weekly Sunday afternoon meeting on 22 November.

Martin Seccombe and his wife Samantha have recently moved into Sonning Common and are working with the church to reach out to the village.

Martin says 'It seems things at the church have been quiet for some time, so it's great to be able to announce the resumption of a weekly Sunday meeting. We have decided to meet at 4.30pm each week, hoping that will be a convenient time for local people and their families to join us. The meeting will be a simple gathering, with singing, prayer and a Bible reading followed by an explanation of its meaning and relevance to our lives. We hope that the church will be a place people find friendship and come to know something more about God. We look forward to welcoming local people and making new friends.'

In due time the church would like to provide a weekday group for mums and their small children, as well as other opportunities to learn more about what Christians believe with plans for a 'Christianity Explored' course in the spring.

For more details about any of these activities, please contact Martin & Samantha on 0118 972 3822. ●



## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

### ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, Rotherfield Peppard

#### Christmas Eve

5.30pm Nativity Service  
9pm Holy Communion

#### Christmas Day

9am Holy Communion  
11am Seven Lessons and Carols

### ST JOHN'S AND CHRIST THE KING

Advent celebrations kick off with our Christingle Services in both churches.

#### Christingle services

Sunday 6 December at 4.30pm at St John the Baptist

Thursday 24 December at 4.30pm at Christ the King

These are magical little services featuring an orange Christingle, aimed at the whole family.

#### Other celebrations

Carols and Readings Friday 18 December at 7.30 at St John's

Midnight Mass Thursday 24 December at 11.00 at St John's

Family Eucharist with Carols Friday 25 December at 9.30 at Christ the King

Family Eucharist with Carols Friday 25 December at 10.30 at St John's

### ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Peppard Road, Sonning Common

It was a great pleasure to welcome visitors from the village to our open day on 26 September. Some were curious to have a look around a building they had passed many times but had never entered and others came because they didn't know we were here until they received our invitation leaflet. For some people it was an opportunity to reconnect to the Church after a long absence. Whatever the reason for coming we hope everyone enjoyed the tour of the church, the talk by Fr Paul and the ample supply of tea and cakes as they looked at the displays of the various activities in the parish in the hall.

If you want to know more about our parish community, here in Sonning Common, there is no need to wait for another open day. You are welcome to join us at any time for one of our weekend services. In addition, Morning Prayer with Holy Communion is said most weekday mornings and one evening a week there is a time for quiet prayer and reflection. Talks and courses are occasionally held. For times and details of our services and activities visit [saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk](http://saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk) and download the latest newsletter.

### Everyone is most welcome to join us at our Advent and Christmas activities:

**An hour of quiet prayer and reflection**  
Tuesday 1 December, 7pm

**Pangbourne Silver Band Christmas Concert** Sunday 6 December, 4pm  
Tickets: adults £5, children free (from the parish office or on the door)

**Mass of the Immaculate Conception**  
Tuesday 8 December, 7.30pm

**Advent talk by Fr Paul Rowan**  
Wednesday 9 December, 8pm

**An hour of quiet prayer and reflection**  
Monday 14 December, 7pm

**Advent talk by Fr Paul Rowan**  
Wednesday 16 December, 8pm

**Flower arranging workshop**  
Saturday 19 December, time to be announced

**Reconciliation service in preparation for Christmas** Monday 21 December, 7.30pm

**Christmas Mass for families with very young children** Thursday 24 December, 5pm. **Reading and carols** at 8.30pm followed by **'Midnight' Mass** at 9pm

**Christmas morning Mass**  
Friday 25 December 10.30am

**Vigil Mass of the Holy Family**  
Saturday 26 December, 5.30pm

**Mass of the Holy Family**  
Sunday 27 December, 9am and 10.30am



DECEMBER 2015

WEDNESDAY 2	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common WI. Refreshments and Sales Tables. Christmas Craft Making Demonstrations Open to all. Raising funds for local community projects - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
SATURDAY 5	Primary Cross Country - Chiltern Edge School	9am - 12 noon
MONDAY 7	Chiltern Edge perform 'Footloose' - matinee - Chiltern Edge School	
TUESDAY 8	Chiltern Edge perform 'Footloose' - evening - Chiltern Edge School	
TUESDAY 8	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - AGM - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.15pm
WEDNESDAY 9	Chiltern Edge perform 'Footloose' - evening - Chiltern Edge School	
THURSDAY 10	Chiltern Edge perform 'Footloose' - evening - Chiltern Edge School	
THURSDAY 10	Sonning Common Women's Institute - Christmas Party with entertainment by A Cappella group, Cat's Chorus - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 11	Chiltern Players - Murder Mystery evening with three course meal. Tickets £15 available from 0118 9722632 - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 11	Nottakwire round the village carol singing - Start at Village Hall	4.30pm
MONDAY 14	FISH - Tea party - Village Hall	2.30pm
MONDAY 14	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 17	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am

JANUARY 2016

MONDAY 11	FISH - Tea party - Village Hall	2.30pm
TUESDAY 12	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "Growing Dahlias" a talk by Graham Talbot - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.30pm
MONDAY 18	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 21	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 21	Sonning Common Women's Institute - Social evening with fish & chip supper and bingo - Village Hall	7.30pm
THURSDAY 28	FISH - Henley Farmers' Market	

The **FISH Volunteer Centre** runs regular door-to-door shopping trips to Tesco in Henley every Monday morning and to Henley Waitrose, Henley Farmers Market, Morrisons in Reading and Reading Town Centre every month.

The programme of shopping and leisure trips for each month is published and distributed on 20th of the preceding month and bookings are taken from that date. Copies of the programme are available the FISH Volunteer Centre, Sonning Common Library, the Christian Community Action shop, Pet Country Supplies and on request from Carson's Chemist. The monthly programme of trips is posted on noticeboards in both Peppard and Sonning Common.

Details of all minibus trips can also be found on the FISH website [www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk](http://www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk)

For more information and to book any trip call **0118 972 3986** any weekday between 09.30 and 11.30 a.m. ●

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